

Information Regarding Brule River State Forest Land Purchase - October 2007

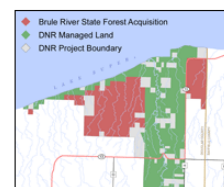
Background

At its July meeting, the Natural Resources board approved the purchase of 5,889.13 acres of land as an addition to the Brule River State Forest for the price of \$6,111,358. The land had previously been owned by Wausau Paper Company. A private conservation group, The Conservation Fund, acted as the "middleman" between the Department Wausau Papers to help the transaction take place. The acquisition boundaries of the forest had been altered with the approval of the property master plan in 2002 to include the majority of this land within the purchase boundaries of the State Forest.

DNR Land Acquisition Program

The DNR's policy is to purchase land only from willing sellers, and the purchase price of the property is set by an appraisal prepared in compliance with state and national guidelines. On any DNR land purchased since 1992, the DNR makes an aid payment which is equivalent to or greater than the amount of property tax that would be due if the land were still in private ownership. The purchase price of a property is used as a substitute for the estimated fair market value as shown on tax bills. Each year, the purchase price is adjusted to reflect the change in values in the tax district where the land is located. If the value of the tax district goes up 10%, the value of the DNR land goes up 10% and vice versa. Each year, the adjusted purchase price is multiplied by the tax district's level of assessment to determine the aid payment that is paid by the DNR to the tax district.

For this current purchase, and example for the tax year 2006 (payable in 2007) will be used since this is what we currently have data on. The town of Cloverland mill rate for 2006 was \$29.88 per \$1000 in assessed valuation. The \$29.88 that the town receives in tax payments each year is split up amongst the Town, WITC, Maple School District, Douglas County, and the State. From this recent state purchase based upon last year's mill rate the following will outline the payment in lieu of taxes that the state will make each year. Keep in mind that the mill rate for the town will change from year to year.



Brule River State Forest 2007 Acquisition.
Larger Map [PDF, 312KB]

2006 Town of Cloverland mill rate : \$29.88/\$1000 valuation

DNR purchase Price = \$6,111,358.00 / 1000 = 6,111.358 X \$29.88

DNR payment in lieu of taxes based upon 2006 tax year = \$182,607.37

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| Town keeps | 29.14% | = \$52,956 |
|------------|--------|------------|

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| WITC gets | 5.74% | = \$10,481 |
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|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Maple School gets | 37.37% | = \$68,240 |
|-------------------|--------|------------|

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|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Douglas County gets | 26.73% | = \$48,810 |
|---------------------|--------|------------|

| | | |
|------------|-------|-----------|
| State gets | 1.03% | = \$1,881 |
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These numbers are to be used for comparison purposes only, keep in mind that tax rates will change over the years, and the DNR land value will be adjusted along with other properties within the township.

Recreational Use of Brule River State Forest

The recently purchased property, along with the great majority of the rest of the Brule Forest is open for public recreation such as hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, and sightseeing. Forest roads are open to road licensed vehicles only, unless posted as closed or otherwise bermed or gated. Roads are closed to vehicles for reasons such as areas designated as hunter walking trails or in areas where resource damage may occur with vehicle traffic. At this time, all forest roads within the newly purchased area in the town of Cloverland are posted as closed to motor vehicle traffic due to the high potential for rutting to occur on the logging roads. These roads were constructed as winter access logging roads and were never meant to be utilized for vehicle traffic during non frozen conditions.

ATV use is not allowed on State of Wisconsin owned land unless on a trail posted as open to ATV use or by special permit issued by the DNR. This is generally true of all state owned lands. "Permanent" tree stands are also not allowed on state owned land. Be sure to read the regulations for state owned and managed lands as listed on page 36 of the 2007 deer hunting regulations booklet.

Future Forest Management Plans

Forest management plans are to manage the forest as indicated in the Brule River State Forest Master Plan. This new acquisition will be managed as a portion of area #1, The Lake Superior Clay Plain Native Community Management Area. The majority of this area consists of aspen and alder pockets that originated with harvesting that has occurred from the mid 1960's through the last few years. Future plans for the forest is to manage to promote the increased presence of conifers such as white spruce, white pine, and balsam fir. This will be done by conducting small sized (2-10 acre areas) regeneration harvests that will create a large amount of "edge" which promote the development of these species.

Access Management Plan

An access management plan will be developed to determine what road upgrades if any are needed to facilitate access into these newly acquired areas. Currently the access into these lands is by foot traffic only, using existing town roads as access points. The use of ATV's is not allowed on any state lands, and the area would not meet any state guidelines for the designation of an ATV trail. The Brule Forest wants to encourage hunting within these areas, as reduction of the deer population will benefit the management of the forest. The current master plan calls for the development of a new hunter walking trail system somewhere within Area #1 (North of Hwy FF) of the Brule Master Plan.